



FEMA

Grand Blanc Family High and Dry Old Home Under Nine Feet of Water

Grand Blanc, MI - When the severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding struck the lower part of the State of Michigan in late May 2004, few had any idea that it would affect tens of thousands of Michigan families and cost more than \$51 million in grants and low-interest loans for disaster assistance. For one Grand Blanc family, the storms and flooding had the opposite affect. What use to be their home was flooded again, but this time the Minard family was sitting high and dry and didn't need any disaster assistance. When Karen Minard returned to her old neighborhood near Thread Creek, she couldn't believe her eyes after discovering nine feet of water in the area she had once called "home."

It was in 2000 when a flood inundated the city of Grand Blanc, located a short 10 miles south of Flint, severely damaging many homes and leaving roads impassible. Flooding from Thread Creek plus poor drainage caused major flooding that left homeowners helpless and city officials unable to control the rising creek. Together, they took a proactive approach to deal with the repeated problem. A Federal disaster declaration made grant money available for mitigation projects throughout the State. Hence, Grand Blanc decided to pursue a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) project for the acquisition of homes damaged repeatedly from flooding.

The double threat of flooding from Thread Creek and sewage backup led the Minards to participate in the buyout project. The Minards were one of five families who participated in the voluntary buyout program just seven months before the May 2004 flooding. Four of the acquired homes were still awaiting demolition when flooding struck again.

According to Randy Byrne, City Manager of Grand Blanc, City Officials were getting tired of repairing the same damage after every flood and thought a proposal to acquire these homes at a cost share of 75 percent Federal and 25 percent non-Federal match could help to solve the problem. The Community submitted its proposal, and the project was selected by the Michigan State Police/Emergency Management Division (MSP/EMD). When FEMA approved funding, City Officials provided homeowners specific criteria for participation that included an appraisal and offer to buy out the property at pre-flood fair market value. Five homeowners decided to be a part of the voluntary project, and the Federal share of the project was \$626,322.

In addition to the families who occupied the acquired homes, the Community also benefited from the buyout. A major component of HMGP is that ownership of the acquired land reverts to the City with a deed restriction stating it must remain open space. The City used the land, demonstrating a conscientious approach to floodplain management, by incorporating it into Rusk Park. Now when Thread Creek floods, there is no maintenance required for the Park.

The key, according to Byrne, "is having a casual meeting and getting everyone on the same page." Informing the residents about the available options is imperative.



Genesee County,
Michigan



Quick Facts

Sector:

Public

Cost:

Amount Not Available

Primary Activity/Project:

Acquisition/Buyouts

Primary Funding:

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)